

THE BUBU SHELL

Wantok Environment Centre (WTEC)
 P.O.Box. 145 LUGANVILLE, Santo Website: www.positiveearth.org
 TEL/Fax (678) 37733 Email:enquiries@positiveearth.org

OCTOBER 2005
 VOLUME 1, ISSUE 3

MALAMPA PROVINCE SUPPORTS CONSERVATION



Malampa Councillors, Area Secretaries and Chiefs learning about the ecological principles

Twenty two (22) participants from Malampa Province attended a one day participatory workshop organized by Malampa Provincial and Wantok Environment Centre (WTEC) on May 23rd 2005. The participants included every member of the Malampa Council and Area Secretaries, Chiefs and representatives of conservation areas from Malekula. The main objective of the workshop was to raise the profile and awareness of conservation areas and their contribution towards development at the provincial level.

Provincial governments are in close proximity to rural areas and their policies and programs have direct impact on village-based conservation initiatives. Also, the Decentralisation Act of Vanuatu, provides provincial governments with powers to pass by-laws appropriate to their provinces. Getting recognition and support for conservation at provincial government level is crucial to sustainability of conservation efforts carried out in the villages.

The workshop began with very broad environmental

awareness activities, followed by discussions on sustainable development, eventually narrowing down to importance and role played by conservation in achieving sustainable development, and conservation areas needs for support from the provincial government. The workshop ended on a very positive note when the Malampa Secretary General and councillors (including the opposition members of the assembly) came up with several resolutions that will be carried out in support of environmental and resource management in the province.

The discussion on sustainable development was particularly interesting. Sustainable development consists of three pillars namely economic development, social development and environmental capital development. Unfortunately, the social and the environmental aspects and their contribution towards economic growth is generally overlooked. Discussing these in simple but practical terms helped the participants to relate it to their daily activities. More importantly, it emphasises the role resource management and conservation plays in sustainable development not only in the village and provincial levels but nationally as well.

Conservation areas representatives were delighted with the outcome of the workshop. Most conservation areas have been in existence for a number of years with limited or no recognition and support at the provincial level. The workshop gave them the opportunity to place themselves on the Malampa map as well as establish the importance of the work they are doing. The workshop was timely after the Malampa Province elections and the councillors who attended the workshop were all part of the newly setup council assembly.

There was a round of applause when the Secretary General announced that the province will be hiring a staff as of July

2005 who will take on the responsibilities of both planning and environmental development. A focal point of contact in the provincial office has always been one of the priority needs identified by Malampa conservation areas and achieving this under this newly setup provincial government gave conservation area representatives reason to celebrate.

Feedback from Councillors, Area Secretaries and Chiefs was also very positive. They were all very thankful for the workshop which they found very informative and helpful. Most of them commented that they now understand the importance of managing our environment and resources and that they will be going back to their communities and families to both change their outlook towards the environment / resources as well as pass on the knowledge to their communities. Several council members asked if WTEC could run similar workshops in their communities.

Successes like this help to encourage greater co-operation and participation in achieving the common goal of sustainable development. WTEC is now preparing to run a similar workshop with Councillors, Area Secretaries, Chiefs and conservation projects in Sanma. For more information contact WTEC on 37733.

IN THIS ISSUE

<i>WTEC Background and Objectives</i>	2
<i>MOU signing with Vanuatu Environment Unit</i>	2
<i>Volunteer Reflections—Jeana Goddard</i>	2
<i>A Way Forward with VBRMA Network</i>	3
<i>Environment News - Pacific and International</i>	3/4
<i>Staff, Thanks and Visitors, Membership and Events</i>	4

WTEC Background and Objectives

The plan to form a locally-based NGO to look after the needs and interests of rural conservation projects was first formulated during a workshop for community-based conservation areas organized by VPAI in 1999.

As enshrined in its constitution, its mission is the care and protection of Vanuatu's natural environment, recognising the importance for all forms of life, for present and future generations and in the sustainable development of the country.

WTEC's approach is people centred. Its main focal area is delivering technical support and other services needed by rural communities, families and individuals directly involved in the

conservation or protection of Vanuatu's wildlife and ecosystems and/or the sustainable management of natural resources. WTEC also has an education programme in schools, is engaged in promoting sustainable income generation (particularly from low-impact tourism) and is involved in species specific conservation and research that is in line with national and provincial conservation priorities.

The primary objectives of the WTEC as can be found in its Constitution are:

1. To facilitate mutual support and co-operation between environmental initiatives and projects through the membership of the Wantok Environment Centre.

2. To encourage and support environmental initiatives and projects consistent with the goal of the organisation, especially those being undertaken by individuals and communities in rural areas.
3. To facilitate better co-ordination and improved co-operation between government and non-government organisations involved in environmental matters, particularly in delivering environmental awareness and support at the community level.
4. To work with schools and other learning institutions to stimulate interest in Vanuatu's environment and increase practical skills and experience in environmental subjects.
5. To facilitate the use of appropriate

technologies that reduces human impact on the environment.

6. To encourage and support income-generating activities that are sustainable and have a low social and environmental impact.
7. To encourage and support the application of traditional knowledge and practices in the management and conservation of natural resources in Vanuatu.
8. To raise awareness of environment issues of importance to ni-Vanuatu and provide follow-up and support as and when appropriate.

In March 2004 Wantok Environment Centre (WTEC) was incorporated in Vanuatu as a charitable association.

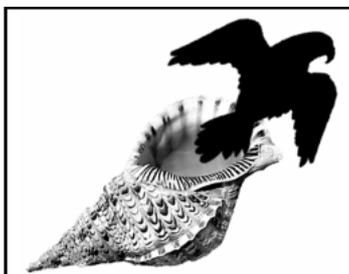
WTEC signs MOU with Vanuatu Environment Unit

On 13 May 2005, a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) was signed in Port Vila between WTEC (by Treasurer, Mr Mark Kalotap and the Vanuatu Environment Unit (by Director, Mr Ernst Bani) - making it the first ever MOU between WTEC and a department of central government that has environmental functions and responsibility.

The MOU provides a framework for cooperation and collaboration in the area of sustainable development and biodiversity conservation for Vanuatu. The MOU refers to specific areas of mutual interest where WTEC and the VEU can work together, share information and resources to enhance environmental outcomes. This MOU also contains provisions relating to scientific and other research issues associated with the environment. The MOU reflects the development of a continuing and growing relationship for a three year period after which time the MOU can be reviewed and/or

amended to respond to the changing needs, policy, capacity and responsibilities of either party.

"This MOU is a foundation stone on which the Vanuatu Environment Unit and Wantok Environment Centre can build a mutually supportive partnership to help achieve sustainable development goals in Vanuatu", says WTEC's Director (Roy Hills).



WTEC logo. Bubu shell symbolizes custom and tradition, instrument of calling people together. Bird symbolizes carrier of environmental message out to public.

Reflections of WTEC's Marine Biologist, Jeana Goddard

After two years of seeing new places, meeting new people and trying new food (laplap), I am now preparing to go back to the places, people and food that I grew up with. While I will understand American people a bit more, and like American food a whole lot more - Vanuatu definitely takes the cake in terms of seeing new environments.

I will never forget the nabanga tri haos I climbed on Nguna; the hybrid hibiscus I smelled in Walarano; or the biggest piece of table coral EVER that I saw in Wiawi. I will always remember drinking fresh water from springs (no filter needed) on Ambrym, Malekula, and Epi. My life will forever be impacted by the realization that every plant in Vanuatu has the potential to be used as food, water, medicine, housing, clothes, entertainment and a sense of self.

While I thank all of the ni-Vanuatu who taught me so much about the environment and different types of

conservation, I would like to remind everyone that Vanuatu is your country and it is your responsibility to take care of it...

You have all amazed me with the many ways of conserving your resources and reasons for doing so. You do not need fancy words and expensive research to prompt you to look after your fish, trees, water and ground for your grandchildren's grandchildren. You simply need a desire to work together and respect for chiefly or community decisions to set aside a piece of ground or sand beach or reef.

I sincerely hope that you all continue your conservation efforts and prompt other communities to join you in making sure that the beauty of Vanuatu i save stap oltaem.

Jeanna Goddard
Marine Biologist
4 July 2005

A WAY FORWARD FOR VANUATU WITH THE VBRMA NETWORK



A one week workshop on Village Based Resource Management Areas (VBRMA) brought together 37 participants from communities and organizations involved in supporting conservation work. The organizations represented included Wantok Environment Center (WTEC), International Waters Program (IWP), Vanuatu Kaljoral Senta (VKS), Wan Smol Bag (WSB), Peace Corps Vanuatu (PCV), Fisheries Department (FD), Environment Unit (EU), Vanuatu Cultural Centre (VCC), Foundation for the Peoples of the South Pacific (FSP), Solomon Islands Locally Managed Marine Area (SILMMA) and the University of the South Pacific (USP). The workshop was held between 18th and 22nd July 2005 in Dumbea Hall, Port Vila and was funded by MacArthur Foundation through FSP and USP.

The main objective of the workshop was 1) to share knowledge and experiences on the use of traditional methods of marine conservation and management; 2) discuss the integration of science and traditional knowledge; 3) identify constraints and challenges faced by VBRMAs and discuss ways to deal with

these problems, as well as harmonizing the approach for all stakeholders.

The biggest achievement of the workshop was the setting up of a network between stakeholders and village-based conservation areas. Initially the network is aimed at sharing knowledge and skills among the conservation areas, between the conservation areas and relevant organizations, and between the relevant government and non-government organizations. It is hoped that this will be broadened in the future to include other areas of cooperation.

Some of the challenges faced by village based conservation areas as highlighted in their presentations are land/reef tenure disputes, chiefly titles associated with land tenure, trespassing as a result of disputes, deteriorating chiefly powers, and lack of management plans and monitoring skills. It was also highlighted that in some places resource management has been successfully separated from land disputes, but this is often difficult to achieve.

It was generally agreed and encouraged throughout the

workshop that conservation efforts should be firmly rooted in our traditional system of governance and management practices. However, these should be enhanced through the use of scientific monitoring know-how and knowledge on the existing Vanuatu laws that covers resource conservation and management.

With the limited resources available, sharing skills and experience through a network will open up an avenue for stakeholders and communities to capitalize on each others' capacity and in achieving a common goal. Indeed, a follow up meeting on 2nd September 2005 between institutional stakeholders resulted in a list of actions to move the VBRMA Network forward.

Member of the network are planning to meet and interact on a regular basis and to share work plans, resources, reports, information, expertise for the benefit of natural resource conservation and management in Vanuatu. Other organizations are encouraged to join and should contact Tevi at FSP Vila on phone 22915 for further information.

ENVIRONMENT NEWS

VANUATU

"Krab Kokonas Prosecutions"

Daily Post 12 July 2005

The Sanma Province Krab Kokonas Taskforce is delighted with recent prosecution outcomes under the krab kokonas ban season. There have been three cases in Santo which are the first environmental related prosecutions for Vanuatu. Senior Magistrate Jimmy Garae has sent a strong message to the offenders and to the wider community that offences against the ban season will be taken seriously to protect this threatened species of Vanuatu. Two offenders from Khole Village have been fined 20,000 vatu each (plus court costs) for killing and eating coconut crab at their house. Another offender from Natawa Village has also been fined 20,000 vatu (plus court costs) for hunting crab and selling them in Luganville town.

PACIFIC

"SPREP urges Pacific to Wage War on Waste"

www.sprep.org/ws/article

This World Environment Day, the South Pacific Regional Environment Programme (SPREP) is urging all Pacific Islanders to take steps to a cleaner environment by reducing levels of solid waste in their homes, communities, schools and work places. SPREP is calling on the Pacific region to take action against waste by reducing, reusing and recycling their waste.

It is estimated that most of the waste thrown away in the Pacific can be redirected or composted, rather than ending up in landfills or open dump sites. In most Pacific Islands, more than 50% of waste produced is organic, that can be composted to make rich fertilizer for plants and food.

Continued on page 4

**ENVIRONMENT NEWS
CONTINUED...**

Many materials thrown away are recyclable, however, many countries have insufficient infrastructure, resources and capacity to support the development of effective solid waste management. The Pacific Year of Action Against Waste (funded by NZAID) is a SPREP initiative that aims to support Pacific Islands coordinate national campaigns to reduce levels of solid waste.

For more information contact: Chris Peteru (chrisp@sprep.org) or phone (685) 21929)

INTERNATIONAL**"Activist Profile Hua Taishan, Huai River Defender"**

(www.pacificenvironment.org)

Mr Huo Taishan wants to change the course of a river. Only ten years ago, China's Huai River had enough clean, freshwater for dozens of villages along its route, with plenty of fish to support the economies and appetites along its 5,500km path (sustaining 100 million Chinese people). However, industrial pollution from tanning, paper, chemical factories and illegal discharges has turned the river into a black, sudsy and lethal flow.

Life along the Huai River is a risky prospect. Eating fish is dangerous; some villages are so poisoned they are now known as "cancer villages"; pollution related diseases are shocking; 84% of young men are plagued by constant diarrhea; birth rates have declined; many newborns are deformed and cancer is occurring in victims as young as one year old.

Alarmed by the rapid degradation of the river, Mr Taishan has quit his job and formed the Huai River Defenders. He is but one example of a rising trend in China - citizens taking matters into their own hands, and building grassroots organisations to fight the onslaught of pollution from rapid industrialization. The Huai River stands as an extreme example of how China has prioritized economic growth over the environment and public health.

**REEF CHECK
VANUATU**

Vanuatu has hosted its first Reef Check training course. Reef Check Vanuatu coordinator (Mike Lameier) along with the support of great team of local trainers ran the course in Pango Village, Efate from May 16-20. The participants included Peace Corps volunteers, Japanese International Cooperation Agency volunteers and local scuba dive personal.

Participants were provided with the necessary surveying and training materials (ie. slates, paper, pencils, field guides, tape measures, sinkers, training manuals and presentations). They will be expected to return to their work sites and train a local counterpart to conduct surveying and report back data. Reef Check Vanuatu will then collect data, transfer it to a Peace Corps' coral reef monitoring database and send it back to the communities and the national coral reef monitoring network data (based with the Department of Fisheries). The information can be used locally and will be forwarded to the Global Coral Reef Monitoring Network in order help improve knowledge, education, awareness and management of coral reefs at the local, national, regional and international levels.

During the course, there was a round table discussion with local coral reef stakeholders from various sectors. The theme was how can coral reef stakeholders collaborate to advance good management of Vanuatu's coral reefs and related activities? The discussion was very successful and resulted in the creation of a newsletter for the Vanuatu Coral Reef Monitoring Network called "**Vanuatu Reef Times**". It is hope that this will improve communications between coral reef stakeholders. Another training course for communities with marine conservation areas and scuba dive personal is being planned for early August.

**THANKS &
VISITORS**

A special thank you goes to **Jeanna Goddard** and **Donna Llewellyn** - for their volunteer assistance during their time with WTEC. Together, they have made significant contributions to WTEC and giving support to our members in various ways. Thank you to the **SPREP** for contribution of resources for Environment Week; and also to **Dr Joanne Bell (VQIS)** and **Tarer Garae (Department of Forestry)** for their written articles that were published during Environment Week. Thanks again to **Mr Neville Coleman** for his efforts and wonderful article about WTEC and education work in the July issue of Dive Log Australasia.

Jayleen Worek's creative mind has helped her stand tall. Jayleen (Class 6, Rowhani Primary School, Santo) is the South Pacific Regional winner of SPREP's "What's your waste wise idea?" poster competition. Her poster was designed on recycled paper. The judging panel was extremely impressed by Jayleen's simple, colorful and effective design. She has won books to the value of NZ\$500 Rowhani School. Well done!

EVENTS

Phyllis attended the PICCC course at USP in Fiji and also had leave visiting family. Marie has attended a Project Proposal Development and Computer Course delivered by VANGO. Jeanna attended the Reef Check Workshop and did a workshop and marine surveys in Ambae. WTEC co-ordinated five written articles which were published on every day of the week for Environment Week in June. The WTEC team did a half-day Environmental Awareness at Jarailand Village; and also gave a presentation at the Youth Challenge International Workshop. War conducted survey work at Butmas. Tarer and Potiano completed an agro-forestry introductory training held at Wiawi. WTEC participated in further work on Ambrym in relation to the Vanuatu Megapode. A management plan review of Nabi Conservation Area was carried out from 19th to 24th September at Wiawi. Lastly, WTEC supported a PCRC Environmental Diplomacy and Advocacy Training held in Luganville for young people from the northern provinces.

COMING UP ...

- Sustainable development workshop for Sanma Councilor's workshop on 14th November.
- Printing and distribution of WTEC's forest conservation poster in November.
- Malekula tour of Narabul Theatre's new drama on Forest Conservation from 3rd to 10th November.
- Land use planning and agro-forestry workshop at Kole 1 in December.
- Management plan review of Vatthe CA at Matantas—dates to be announced.
- End of FCI Project in December.

MEMBERSHIP

WTEC is a member based NGO. Individuals and organisations with a keen interest in environmental work and resource use management are encouraged to join WTEC. We have the following membership categories:

Foundation Members**Rural Conservation Initiatives****Conservation Members****Friends of WTEC**

For more information contact:
Wantok Environment Centre
PO Box 145, Luganville, Santo
2nd Floor
Sanma Province Building.
Phone/Fax: (678) 37733
Website: www.positiveearth.org
Email: enquiries@positiveearth.org